

From: C.D. Larson
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 2:36pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear DOJ Team:

First, thank you for all you've been busy doing on the terrorism front. I deeply appreciate and support what your team has been doing - both publicly and behind the scenes - to keep all of us safe.

I'm writing regarding the Microsoft Settlement. I've been in the computer industry for some number of years and have seen how Microsoft operates, and I'm disappointed by the proposed settlement. It stifles competition and the economy, and is a real disaster for our industry.

Once upon a time, there were many companies who made workable word-processing programs. Innovation and competition flourished. How many such firms can you name today? Not many, I'll bet. That's because of Microsoft's aggressive tactics with Microsoft Word. Is it the best word processing program out there? Hard to say, because nobody compares any more. And there's almost nobody around to compare TO. And that's what I'm talking about. There should be dozens of companies, writing great products and competing on price. And they should be around the world, not just in Seattle.

What our industry is objecting to is Microsoft's continued rampage against area after area of computing. First it was operating systems, then spreadsheets, then word processing, then browsers. Databases are next, followed by imaging. My company's offerings are next; MS is copying our technology to use in their product so they can tell us to go fly a kite. I am not arguing against competition; I'm suggesting we should HAVE some.

My objection is not to Microsoft's "ability to innovate", it's their ability to keep others from innovating. By crushing other firms, they force everyone to use their product regardless of what it costs or how good it really is. That's bad for competition, bad for products, and bad for our country.

I think the settlement - especially in the face of the judge's findings in the case - is a weak slap on the wrist and will not address any of the grievances made. What should be done? I don't think it's necessary for the company to be broken up IF they could be successfully kept out of the applications world.

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